

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed December 27, 2008, the Examiner noted that claims 1-19 were pending and rejected claims 1-19. Examiner is respectfully requested to correct the Disposition of Claims section under Office Action summary to correctly indicate that claims 1-20 were pending and claims 1-20 were rejected. Claims 1, 2 and 16-20 have been amended, no claims have been canceled, new claims 21 and 22 have been added; and, thus, in view of the foregoing claims 1-22 remain pending for reconsideration which is requested. No new matter is believed to have been added. The Examiner's rejections and objections are respectfully traversed below.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

On page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-12, 14 and 16-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Whitman et al. (USPN 6,772,150, hereinafter "Whitman").

Whitman is related to a search engine system that uses information about historical query submissions to a search engine to suggest previously submitted, related search phrases to users (see Whitman, Abstract).

The Office Action, in the Response to Arguments, asserted that "Fig. 8 of Whitman displays the results (810, 820) of the search extracting from the storage (133) (see col. 6, lines 1-15). The user can select (or simply click on) them then the content (data) of the results (documents) will be extracted and displayed on the screen" (see Office Action, page 2, lines 8-11). The Office Action interprets the above-quoted assertion to constitute "extracting data of documents corresponding to the display item selected by the user from the storage or the data of the plurality of documents" as recited in claim 1. The assertion of the Office Action is traversed with an argument.

Fig. 8 of Whitman provides a search refinement system that generates related search phrases ("related phrases") using a history of search queries submitted to a search engine by a community of users (see Whitman, col. 3, lines 39-42). According to Whitman, the system generates search phrase data which reflects the frequency with which specific phrases containing key terms have been submitted to the search engine (see Whitman, col. 3, lines 43-45). The system uses this search phrase data in combination with the query term(s) entered by the user to recommend related search phrases for refining the query (see Whitman, col. 3, lines 45-48).

Stated another way, related search phrases are *not extracted* from the bibliographic database 133 as asserted in the Office Action. Rather, a query server 132 processes queries by *searching* a bibliographic database 133 for a result (see Whitman, col. 6, lines 1-3). The bibliographic database 133 includes information about the various products that users may purchase through a website 130, thereby enabling the bibliographic database 133 to be searched (see Whitman, col. 6, lines 3-6 and lines 11-13). Therefore, Fig. 8 of Whitman is merely concerned with returning a search result of products contained in the bibliographic database rather than “extracting data of documents corresponding to the display item selected by the user” after the user selects the “display item” which is “utilized as a second search condition” as recited in claim 1.

Further, the Office Action, on page 4, asserted that col. 1, lines 53-62 and col. 3, lines 39-55 of Whitman discloses “transforming said data of said documents corresponding to said selected display item information to indicate said data of said documents to said user in a second display” as recited in claim 1. This assertion by the Office Action is traversed with an argument.

Particularly, col. 1, lines 53-62 of Whitman describes that a user can select one or more suggested query terms to add to the query by using the search engine’s user interface. However, in claim 1 “said data of said documents corresponding to said selected display item” is *transformed* “into information to indicate said data of said documents to said user in said second display form”. This feature is not taught or suggest in Whitman because the cited portion of Whitman is merely concerned with a user selecting terms to add to the query whereas claim 1 “transform[s] said data of said documents … into information to indicate said data of said document to said user in said second display form” so that a user can “select a display item to be utilized as a third search condition”.

Further, according to col. 3, lines 39-55 of Whitman, search phrase data is generated to reflect the frequency with which specific phrases containing keys terms have been submitted to the search engine. The system then uses the search phrase data in combination with the query term(s) entered by the user to recommend related search phrases for refining the query. As a result, related search phrases that are frequently used by others are produced. Stated another way, the cited portion of Whitman describes combining search phrase data with query terms entered by a user to recommend related search phrases for refining the query, whereas claim 1 “transform[s] said data of said documents … into information to indicate said data of said document to said user in said second display form”.

The Office Action also asserted that Fig. 8 and col. 7, line 59 to col. 8, line 5 and col. 14, lines 13-22 of Whitman disclose transforming ... “to enable said user to select a display item to be utilized as a third search condition in a following process, and outputting the transformed information”. However, claim 1 has been amended to traverse this rejection. Claim 1, as amended, recites “transforming said data of said documents corresponding to said selected display item ... to enable said user to select a display item to be utilized as a third search condition in a following process, wherein said display item is generated from said data of said documents corresponding to said selected display items, and outputting the transformed information”.

According to Fig. 8 and col. 7, line 59 to col. 8, line 5 of Whitman, the web server 131 generates and returns to the user a query result page containing suggested related search phrases for the user to select as the new query. In contrast, claim 1 “transform[s] said data of said documents corresponding to said selected display item ... into information ... to enable said user to select a display item” that “is generated from said data of said documents corresponding to said selected display items”. The cited portion of Whitman does not teach or suggest the above-quoted features recited in claim 1 because the cited portion of Whitman is merely concerned with taking a predetermined number of related search phrases that are sorted in order and presenting the predetermined number of the related search phrases to the user for selection rather than “transforming said data of said documents ... to enable the user to select a display item” which is “generated from said data of said documents corresponding to said selected display items” as in claim 1.

Further, according to col. 14, lines 13-22 of Whitman, the user selects any one of the three related search phrases presented to the user so the search engine can perform a search using the selected related search phrases. However, Whitman does not teach or suggest the above-quoted features of claim 1 because the cited portion of Whitman is merely concerned with performing a search result and returning the result to the user instead of “transforming said data of said documents ... to enable the user to select a display item” which is “generated from said data of said documents corresponding to said selected display items” as in claim 1.

Claim 1, as amended, also recites “receiving designation of a second display form from said user”. Nothing was found or cited in Whitman that teaches or suggests the above-quoted feature recited in claim 1.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing, it is submitted claim 1 is patentable over Whitman.

Claim 16 recites

receiving designation of a second display form from said user;

extracting data of documents corresponding to said display item selected by said user from said storage or said data of said plurality of documents; and

transforming said data of said documents corresponding to said selected display item into information to indicate said data of said documents to said user in said second display form, which is designated by said user and different from said first display form, specified by said user and to enable said user to select a display item to be utilized as a third search condition in a following processing, wherein said display item is generated from said data of said documents corresponding

Therefore, it is submitted that claim 16 is patentable for reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 1.

Claim 18 recites

a receiver that receives designation of a second display form from said user;

an extractor that extracts data of documents corresponding to said display item selected by said user from said storage or said data of said plurality of documents; and

a second transformer that transforms said data of said documents corresponding to said selected display item into information to indicate said data of said documents to said user in said second display form, which is designated by said user and different from said first display form, specified by said user and to enable said user to select a display item to be utilized as a third search condition in a following processing, wherein said display item is generated from said data of said documents corresponding to said selected display item, and outputs the transformed information.

Therefore, it is submitted that claim 18 is patentable for reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 1.

Claim 20 recites

extracting data selected by a user from a plurality of documents stored as a predetermined document group by searching the predetermined document group based on a search condition;

transforming the data from the plurality of documents stored in the predetermined document group into information to the user in a display form, which is designated by the user, that enables the user to select a search result as a following search condition to search the predetermined document group based on the following search condition, the search result is generated from the data stored in the predetermined document group

Therefore, it is submitted that claim 20 is patentable for reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 1.

The dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons as their respective base claims and for the additional reasons as presented below.

With respect to claim 3, the Office Action, on page 4, asserts that Fig. 8 of Whitman discloses "dividing said plurality of documents into clusters (Related Searches, Top Matches, Full Results) by using said data of said plurality of documents". However, as previously mentioned above, related searches in Whitman are defined as related search phrases, which are extracted from the history of the search queries submitted to a search engine by a community of users. Therefore, the related searches are not included in "said plurality of documents" as recited in claim 3.

Thus, claim 3 is patentable over Whitman. Further, claims 5, 7, 8 and 10-12 are also patentable over Whitman for reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 3.

With respect to claim 4, the Office Action, on page 5, asserted that that Fig. 8 and col. 7, line 59 to col. 8, line 5 and col. 14, lines 13-22 of Whitman disclose "generating information to display the extracted data items to be utilized as said second search condition in said following processing in said following processing, and a segment that connects between said data items (search key term and document must be linked in order to display the item) and represents the calculated degree of relevancy between said documents corresponding to said data items".

However, according to the cited portions of Whitman, a predetermined number of related search phrases are sorted and presented to the user for selection. When the user selects any one of the related search phrases presented to the user the search engine performs a search using the selected related search phrases. In contrast, claim 1 "generat[es] information to display the extracted data items ... and a segment that connects between said data items". Therefore, claim 4 is patentable over Whitman. Further, claims 6 and 9 are patentable over Whitman for reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to claim 4.

On page 14 of the Office Action, claims 13 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Whitman. It is submitted that claims 13 and 15 are patentable over Whitman for at least the same reasons as their base claim.

New Claim

New claim 21 has been added to recite

21. (NEW) A method, comprising:

extracting a first set of data of documents from a storage device based on a search condition entered by a user;

outputting information, which is changed from the first set of the data, to enable the user to select a second search condition from display items generated from the first set of the data of the documents extracted from the storage device;

extracting a second set of data of documents from the storage device that relates to the second search condition after receiving a specified display format from the user; and

outputting information, which is changed from the second set of the data related to the second search condition, to enable the user to select a third search condition from display items generated from the second set of the data of the documents related to the second search condition.

It is submitted that Whitman fails to teach or suggest the above-mentioned features as recited in claim 21. Therefore, it is submitted that claim 21 is patentable over Whitman.

New claim 22 has been added to recite:

22. (NEW) A method, comprising:

searching a database using a first search condition entered by user;
using search results produced by the first search condition to create second search conditions one of which is selectable by the user for a second search; and

using search results produced by a selected second search condition to create third search conditions one of which is selectable by the user for a third search.

It is submitted that Whitman fails to teach or suggest the above-mentioned features as recited in claim 22. Therefore, it is submitted that claim 22 is patentable over Whitman.

Summary

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

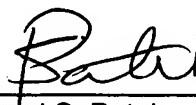
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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